

**Other Choreographies: somatic practice, improvisation and
collaboration in the creation of new dance work**

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Abstract

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In this thesis, dance artist Bee Pallomina reflects on the creative process of three new choreographies: *Field Guide*, *b side*, and *the understory*. The three projects draw inspiration from the natural and material world, and the history and memory of geographical places – in particular, Toronto's Garrison Creek, the winter landscape of the prairies, and the understory of a forest. Pallomina's choreographic research explores techniques of somatic practice, improvisation and collaboration in the creation of new work. In these processes, dramaturgical frames are devised in which Pallomina and her collaborators experiment as creator-performers. They work with systems and scores, creating rigorous choreographies that also have room to change and shift in the moment. Deeply concerned with our impact on and connection with the world around us, Pallomina's work establishes a sense of deep listening, pursuing an intimate collaboration with performers and audience.

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Introduction

I arrived at choreography through an unusual route. Many choreographers know from a young age that they wish to choreograph. They begin from outside of a work looking in, sculpting it from an external perspective. I began my professional work mainly as a performer. Over the years I was involved in a number of processes that required my creative input as a dancer. My responsibility as a dancer grew over time within these processes, and eventually evolved into creative collaborations. I became a “choreographer” from the inside out. I began choreographing from the performer’s perspective, and in collaboration with artists with whom I shared the stage. I am interested in mapping and recording the potentials of choreography created from the perspective of the performer: from the inside out, rather than imposed from the outside onto the stage. This informs one of my main research questions: *How can one make work from the perspective of the performer?* This extended essay unearths and explores my personal methodology for creating/performing new dance work.

Throughout my career as a dancer and choreographer, I have been fascinated by the inter-relational quality of dance performance. Dance depends on a strong sense of interconnectivity between performers, choreographers and audiences. Even more than other performing arts, it is based on physical co-presence – a “thereness” shared by the bodies of the dancers and the bodies of the audience members. Drawing on this shared presence, dance can reveal the primacy of *relation* for our being-in-the-world. A shared sense of our common vulnerability – what philosopher Roberto Esposito

calls *communitas* – can be amplified through dance practice and performance. I am interested as a performer/choreographer/scholar in asking questions about the importance of vulnerability and relationship. This interest informs another set of my research questions:

How can we invoke deep states of listening?

How can we keep alive the process of unfolding in performance?

How do we create work with a heightened responsiveness to ourselves, to each other, and to the time and space that we share together?

How can one continue to deepen relationships and emphasize interconnectivity in dance?

In the past, I have found that the methodologies of somatic practice, improvisation and collaboration can help dance artists and audiences gain a sense of interconnectivity and shared vulnerability. Each of these methodologies encourages a letting-go of the desire for self-protection, a giving up of ourselves. They can help us reach a kind of knowledge that Roberto Esposito calls “non-knowledge” or “knowledge of the other.” As he writes: “Whereas knowledge tends to stitch up every tear, non-knowledge consists in holding open the opening that we already are; of not blocking but rather of displaying the wound *in* and *of* our existence” (119). In the practice of dance, “holding open the opening that we already are” can open our eyes to what is around us, leading us to work that is vibrant and alive and to performances that vibrate the common being of everyone present. I have aspired toward this quality

in the three pieces created for *Other Choreographies: Field Guide, b side, and the understory (part 3)*.

Beginning this research, my primary focus was the use of somatic practice, improvisation and collaboration as methodologies to create new choreographies. In this research I have privileged body intelligence over abstract thinking, spontaneous composition over set choreography, and shared authorship over solo authorship. I have worked to discover and document what is possible and significant about creating new dance work in this way.

Somatic practice – from the Greek word “soma,” meaning “living body” – could be described as a range of practices that seek to heighten our bodily awareness, bridging the gap that Cartesian thought introduced between mind and body (Green 1-3). The body is what is most vulnerable and common to us all; finding ways of listening to the body and accessing body intelligence is key in my research. As a student of several lineages of somatic practice, I have found that the study of these practices can help open up a state of deep listening and receptivity in the dancer. Somatic practice can give dancers the freedom (and responsibility) to ask questions with the mind and answer with the body. *Other Choreographies* explores ways of fostering this kind of embodied openness and intelligence in the dancer, which can be palpable for both performers and audiences.

Improvisation, meaning making spontaneous compositional choices in response to changing conditions, can offer a way to enliven dance performances. Improvising demands that the dancer make decisions in the moment in relation to all elements and bodies in the room. It calls for a high degree of sensitivity and responsiveness, leading

to a sense of presence that offers a rich experience for audiences. Like somatic practice, it can work to bridge the body and the mind: as choreographer Jonathan Burrows puts it, “Improvisation is a negotiation with the patterns your body is thinking” (27). In improvised performance, this vivid negotiation creates a sense of unfolding in real time that is compelling to watch.

Collaboration can help to soften dance artists’ desire for control and ownership, and work to undermine the hierarchies that often develop between dancers and choreographers. There is a strong lineage in contemporary dance, running from the Judson Church (a post-modern dance scene in New York City in the 1960s) to the current work of artists such as Québécois dancer/choreographer Benoît Lachambre and Japanese-American dance artists Eiko and Koma, that anchors itself in collaborative creation. By combining different artistic processes and destabilizing the dancer-choreographer hierarchy, these artists have, in my opinion, created some of the most exciting work in contemporary dance.

Through the process of completing this thesis it became evident to me how much my collaborative work has informed my process. In this work, my collaborators and I often set up dramaturgical frames in which we experiment as creator-performers. We work with systems and scores, creating rigorous choreographies that also have room to change and shift in the moment. There is a process of unfolding in real time onstage within a carefully designed structure. This is how I work when I am creating a solo as well. I create a frame to work in. I make dramaturgical choices about the location, sounds, tasks, context and duration of a piece or a section of a piece. Finally, I place myself inside this frame as an interpreter and see how things

unfold, exploring how I respond in relation to it, and making adjustments to the frame as need be.

My work with dramaturgical frames is informed by my past work with dance scores. I first encountered working with scores with American dance experimentalist Stephanie Skura. In her composition classes we created scores on paper, collecting thoughts, drawing, words and ideas and carefully arranging them on the page. We would then use the scores in the creation and performance of new dances. It was through this work with scores that I learned how to collect materials from different and disparate sources, arrange or assemble them, and use them as tools and inspiration for making dances. I have taken this work of creative assemblage or bricolage a step further in recent years: I now collect sounds, music, text, objects and movement, and creatively assemble them in the space in the same way I used to on paper.

Occasionally, I also create a written score for sections of a piece (see Appendix C).

A number of artists have inspired this research through their exceptional choreographic and performance work in this lineage. Working on this project, I have been particularly inspired by the work of dance artists Pina Bausch, Jonathan Burrows, Steve Paxton, Julyen Hamilton, Benoît Lachambre, Eiko and Koma, Vera Mantero and Stephanie Skura. What spoke to me most in this research was the work of other artists. I have also drawn inspiration from the writings of Georges Perec, Clarice Lispector, Samuel Beckett, Robert Frost, Maya Lin and Rebecca Solnit, and the music and interviews of Glenn Gould.

For this thesis I have created and performed three new choreographic works.

My first project, *Field Guide*, was a structured improvisation that took place at three sites along the course of the Garrison Creek in west Toronto, at sunset, on September 16, 2012. Starting with a small audience at the first site, we travelled downstream, accumulating people, words, sound and movement as we went. The second choreographic project was an autobiographical solo entitled *b side*, which was performed October 25-27, 2012, in the McLean Performance Studio at York University. In this solo I asked “what is the autobiography of the body?” and tried to answer that question through movement. My final thesis project was the creation and performance of *the understory (part 3)*, in collaboration with Saskatchewan-based dance artist Johanna Bundon. *the understory* follows two performers onstage as they create and travel through a winter landscape together onstage and at times become that landscape. The working methodologies of all these projects included the creation of a dramaturgical frame or score, and then the development of each piece through somatic practice, improvisation and collaboration.

As a creative artist I take inspiration from what is around me. I am particularly interested in memory and relationship: not just relationships between people, but our interconnectivity with all things. I draw inspiration from the natural and material world, and the history and memory of geographical places. I am deeply concerned with our impact on and connection with the world around us. My work tries to establish a sense of deep listening, as I pursue an intimate collaboration with audiences and my fellow performers. This brings me to my last set of research questions.

What can I make here now?

What is asking to be addressed?

What is the work asking for?

The work presented in *Other Choreographies* explores questions of relationship, vulnerability and presence in dance performance, resulting in work that aims toward both social relevance and artistic depth. Focussing on sharing, deep listening and responsiveness offers a model that is counter to the competitive individualism of the wider culture. It points towards ways of working with ourselves, others, and our environment in a responsible and responsive manner – by looking and listening closely, and by seeing our interconnection with all things.

Field Guide

*I want to start from the now
from the place I inhabit
from where I sleep
and follow things downstream
we sleep over a buried creek
every night, I dream about the water
please close your eyes
can you hear it? the water?
it's underneath you.
summer is ending
and the sun is almost setting*

Field Guide began with an incantation and an invitation. Each audience member received a card with one of the preceding lines on the front. In time they would be asked to finish this line using their own words, and (if they chose) to add these words to the sound score of the piece. In *Field Guide*, I wanted to bring awareness to the space that we inhabit, its history and its changing face. Over the course of the evening we travelled along the course of a buried river, accumulating words, sounds, gestures and people as we went. In devising this piece, I was inspired by literary and artistic sources – *The Passion according to G.H* by Clarice Lispector,

An Attempt at Exhausting a Place in Paris by George Perec, the Japanese principle of *Wabi-Sabi* – but most of all the proximal and powerful pull of the Garrison Creek itself.

The Garrison Creek is a buried river that runs through the west end of Toronto. Before it was buried, it entered Lake Ontario by the garrison at Fort York, giving it its name. In the 1880s, due largely to pollution, the creek was diverted into underground sewers under city streets, and the original course was filled in with soil. By 1920, the stream was entirely diverted into the sewer system.¹ The creek's existence is still visible in the topography of Toronto's west end neighbourhoods. I was out walking one day with my partner Gabriel Levine along the path of the creek, through the west end of the city. We were trying to figure out where to present my self-produced show. This walk is one that we do often: the buried river passes by just a couple of metres from our home. From where we live we can follow the creek's path downstream, travelling on a pathway of interlinked parks, alleys and schoolyards. As we walked Gabe turned to me and said, "Why not present your work here, along the path of the creek?"

¹ From the "Garrison Creek" entry on the *Lost River Walks* website: "The creek had its beginnings about 12,000 years ago when the last remnants of the Wisconsin Glacier melted off the St. Clair West lands. ... As the great ice sheet continued to melt back, the St Lawrence valley became free of ice and the waters in the Ontario basin dropped to a lower level. Garrison Creek then cut a longer course across the newly dry land to Lake Ontario. For thousands of years, rain and melting snow drained off the sandy drift. At first, heavy storms would have created roaring torrents that cut quickly and deeply into the soil because there was no vegetation to retard the flow... During those 12,000 years, vegetation slowly re-established. Forests of pine, oak, and locust eventually covered the area. Aboriginal peoples hunted in the area... In the 1800s, land was cleared for farms. ... With settlement, the creek began to suffer. By the early 1900s, settlement had become so dense and the creek so polluted with sewage and refuse, that sewers became essential for public health reasons. By the mid 1920s the creek had been completely buried."

I am interested in the link between home and the body, as places one inhabits. When making dance, I like to acknowledge where I am and move from there. So it seemed like the obvious thing to do: start here, from the place I live, and travel downstream. I was interested in this buried tributary and its relation to our bodies. The sites along this river consist of many layers, just as our bodies do. Many artistic performances have taken place in Trinity Bellwoods Park, which is further downstream on the creek's path.² I was interested in the unknown upstream reaches, which are more urban and closer to home. I felt they were closer to my everyday reality, and provided an interesting and complex layering to consider in this context.

Literary sources also informed my research for this piece. *The Passion according to G.H.* by Clarice Lispector describes a woman's moment of awakening. Each chapter ends with a terse poetic line that then forms the beginning of the next chapter. For example, "our hands that are coarse and full of words" ends one chapter and then begins the next (165, 167). These lines were open enough to lead anywhere, and their repetition formed a kind of incantation. That repetition in this novel made an impression on me, and informed the text that I collaborated on with the audience. In *Field Guide* I offer a line as a new beginning and allow the audience to continue the writing, thus bringing them into the collaboration. They add their words and introduce new information into the piece, like tributaries of a stream.

I was also inspired by Georges Perec's *An Attempt at Exhausting a Place in Paris*. In this short book, Perec describes three days in which he sat at various cafes

² These include Dusk Dances, a long running outdoor summer dance festival, Nuit Blanche, and 7all1d, a performance art festival.

and recorded the details of what passed by. Repetition also appears frequently in this book as people, buses, pigeons, and other objects appear and disappear from his view. I found the repetition mesmerizing and heartbreaking: each moment passes never to return. Perec details the “infra-ordinary,” the everyday, and from his perspective you see time pass by “second by dying second” (54). From Perec I took the idea of letting the attention rest lightly on what is present in each moment. This formed a part of my movement score: a light attention on each moment as it shifts and changes.

I also read *Wabi-Sabi for Artists, Designers, Poets and Philosophers* by Leonard Koren, and the principles of Wabi-sabi struck me as linked to my own artistic aspirations. Wabi-sabi represents an aesthetic centered on the acceptance of transience and imperfection. The aesthetic is sometimes described as one of “beauty of things imperfect, impermanent, and incomplete” (7). I was interested in the complexity of the performance sites; I wanted to point to their beauty, but more specifically to their imperfection, their incompleteness, and their potential for change.

The Performance

It all began in the front room of our house. It was the night before Rosh Hashanah, the Jewish New Year, and Gabe served apples and honey to our guests. Once the entire audience had arrived, they were each given an index card containing one line of typewritten text. On the back of each card was the following message:

I made this card for you. I started these lines a long time ago. I was hoping you

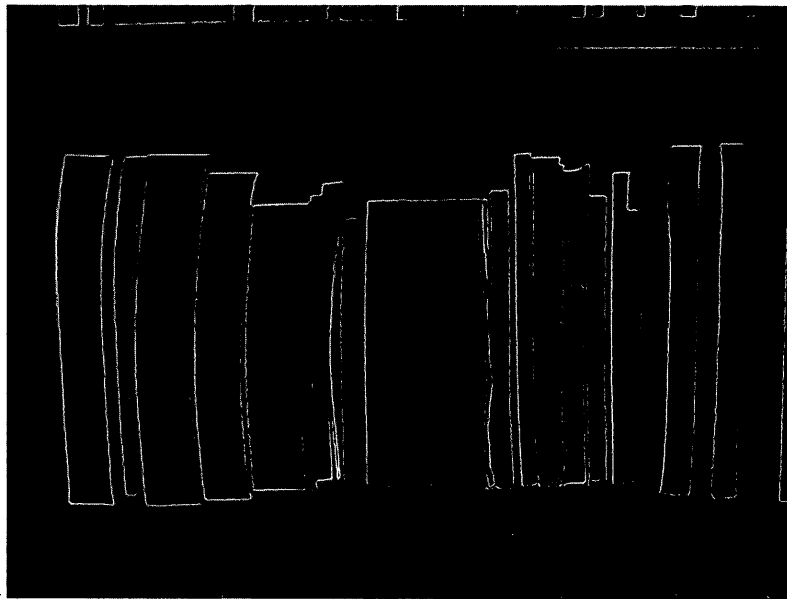
could help me finish them. Finish them, or allow them to finish themselves in your hands.

It will only take a moment. Spontaneity is important here. It can be brief.

Whatever you write or don't write will be exactly what's needed.

They were given one minute to add text to their card. With this gesture, I wanted to invite the audience to join the collaboration, the making of this piece. They were then asked to bring their cards with them as they moved to our small library/studio at the back of the house.

Site 1



It began in a small room
Against the backdrop

Of a wall of books
Spines turned inward against the wall
Rectangles of yellowed-white
Filling the background.

A hand reached, finger extended
and hit play.
The recorded tape began to roll
A mic on the edge of the desk
there to capture sound

the creak of floor boards, the voices
in the room, completing lines
of poetry as wished, as was exactly needed.
Given to us personally
on type written recipe cards.

We sleep over a buried creek...

Ah, then I realized
'oh she's doing exactly what's needed'³

This small room, with a creaky hardwood floor, is where most of my work is conceived and initially rehearsed. In it there are some bookshelves, a table and a piano. I was interested in performing with this room where I rehearse, blurring the lines between practice and performance. It is at the back of the house, away from the bustle of the street. It's quiet, even hushed here, a place of dreaming and making. We turned all the books around on the shelves so that the white pages faced outward – creating a blank backdrop, and hinting at the books' inner life, the multiplicity of their pages, words, and thoughts. The audience sat in a single row along the wall directly opposite the bookcases, which are bordered on one end by a piano, and on the other by our large worktable.

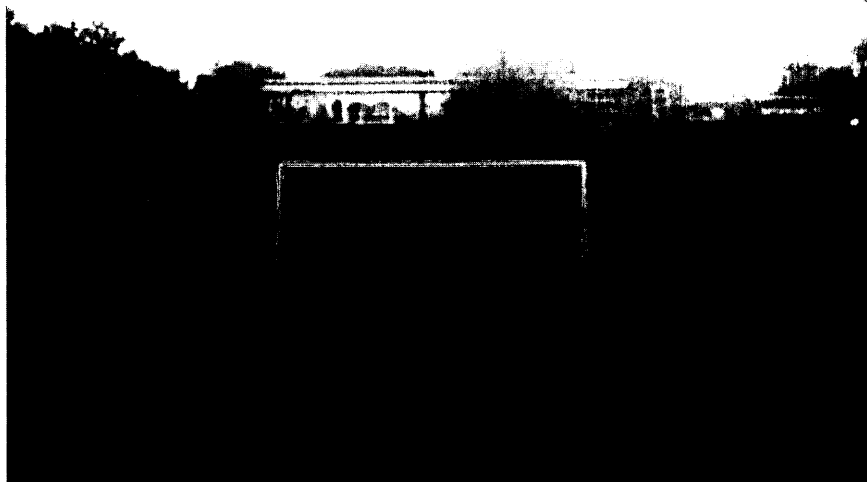
³ I include a poem in three parts by Ruth Levin, who sent me her response to the performance of *Field Guide*.

As the audience enters, I am at the table, eyes closed. There is a cassette recorder on the table, of the portable, flat variety once used in schools. I reach across the table to hit play. The first thing we hear is a recording of my original text in its entirety, beginning with “I want to start from the now” (see beginning of this chapter). Then there is a long silence embedded into the tape, seven minutes to be exact. I begin to move, slowly at first. It is an old tape machine, and the turning of the tape is audible. Audience members begin to add their words to the semi-silence. I dance the architecture of the words and sounds I hear and bring my attention to the space around me. I move through this space, across the creaking wood floor, along the bookcases over to the piano, listening and responding. After seven minutes there is a recording of Glenn Gould playing the “Aria” from the *Goldberg Variations*. I open my eyes and respond to this new aural landscape, gaining momentum like a river beginning to flow. I try to give life and voice to what I perceive as underneath us and behind us. And as I do this I also, like Perec, allow each moment its passing, its disintegration. When the music ends, I thank the audience for coming and invite them to join me at the next site. We exit our house onto College Street and begin to walk along the path of the river; it is a beautiful late summer evening.

There is something that speaks to me in Glenn Gould’s 1955 recording of the “Aria.” I hear the music unfolding in real time. I hear his virtuosity, but more importantly I hear how he listens and responds. The performance lives and breathes, even in the recording. I am inspired by that responsiveness, especially as a maker who comes to choreography through dancing, through performance. Gould uses the *Goldberg* as a kind of frame, articulating his own artistry within that structure. He is

listening, improvising and collaborating within the score of the music. His performance was a huge support and inspiration for this piece.

Site 2



...And then the scene changed
Space expanded & we witnessed
A new setting, another beginning
A different end.

Amidst fruit trees & framed by
white painted goal posts
In the patch of dirt
where too many feet
had been for grass to grow.

And the sky threw in its
lines too; Scattered, perfect & pink.
A great joy touched so lightly
By skips and falls and syncopated stepping

It roared with laughter (Levin)

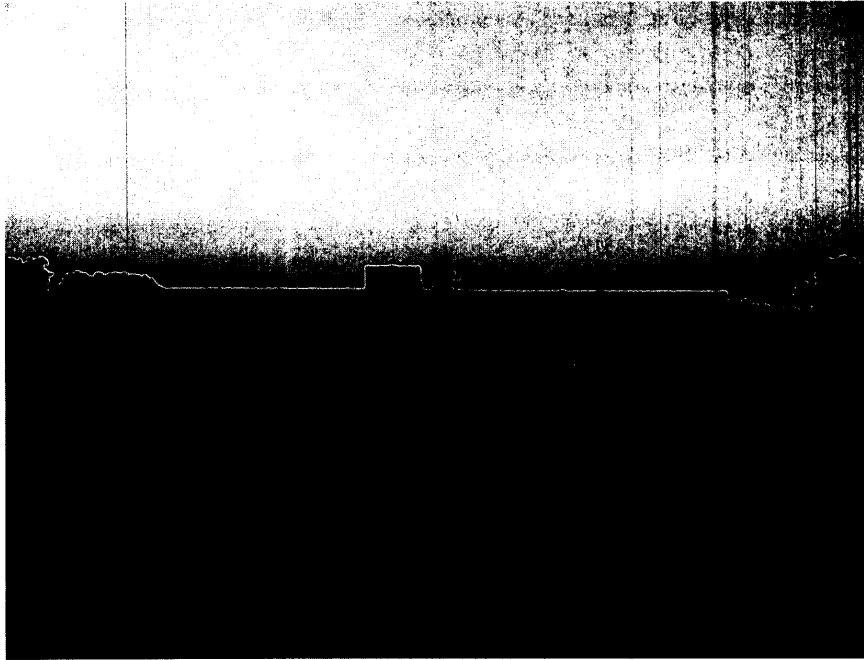
Field Guide's second site was in what remains of an old apple orchard behind Ossington Old Orchard Public School. In front of the small grove of trees there is a goalpost, which frames the performance space. To the north and south the path of the Garrison Creek is fairly clear, with the land rising up on either side; I can sense that the river is underneath. It was once a much deeper ravine, then an orchard, now a schoolyard. To the east and west are two schools, and beyond that are two busy streets, Ossington Avenue and Dovercourt Road. As you look at the site straight on, there is a lot of depth; in the background there is the school, in front of that the orchard, then the goalpost and then the playing field. I wanted to work with this depth of field and these layers of natural and constructed space, to have them in mind as I moved.

As we arrive at the second site, another group of audience members is waiting to meet us. I greet them, then enter the performance space and close my eyes, waiting for the last few audience members from the first site to arrive. During the performance in our library, we recorded all sound, including any spoken text (by the audience) and any ambient sound in the room. We brought this recording to the second site, and now play it back on a portable amplifier. It echoes a little between the houses and what remains of the ravine. To the accompaniment of the sounds recorded in the first performance, I begin the dance again, the same score in a new space. Here, I work with eyes both open and closed. Like an aperture opening, my eyes begin to open. The second site is much bigger, with the increased energy of a public outdoor space. This informs my movement choices. Again I move while listening to the space

I am in, along with the aural landscape, including the ambient noise: a plane passing overhead, a dog running through the space. My movement is amplified in response to the more open environment, but still sourced from that deep place of listening. As this second performance ends, the sun is just beginning to set. Again, I thank the audience and we travel downstream to the last site.

I wanted to perform at sunset, when there is a transition between day and night. I am interested in transitional times and spaces – between night and day, past and present, the real and the imaginal. There is something magical about them: they bridge worlds. I was also interested in this time of year, the end of the summer, moving into fall, towards increasing darkness and mystery. I also chose to perform on a Sunday, when I knew the city would be quiet, sleepy, transitioning from one week to the next. I find that these transitional times induce a kind of reflectiveness, and allow our field of attention to open. As the sun begins to set, we travel to the final performance site.

Site 3



Then the current moved on
Space expanded once again
and the sky belted full volume
Even as she lost her object of adoration.

We sat on the edge of a great space.
And agreements of tremendous delicacy ensued
The reach of a hand, the lift of a shoulder,
the moment before balance is lost
the surroundings wooed into utter collaboration
Tape recorders echoed
And time bowed out of this round.

Ahhh... ok I get it... Exactly what's needed. Without a doubt. (Levin)

The last site was in an open field called George Ben Park. It's an expansive space, extremely deep and wide, and the creek runs right by it. There is a large Catholic primary school in the background; it's quite imposing and looks almost like

a warehouse. I might even say it's a bit ugly, but it provides an effective background and emphasizes the vast width of the space. The layering is less complex than in the second site, but the history of moving bodies in the space is more present: the huge field is used for soccer, baseball and other track and field events.

During the performance in the second site, the audio playing back from the amplifier was re-recorded by two portable cassette recorders, which also picked up any ambient live sounds. The recording is then played back in the last site by all three sound sources – the amplifier and the two tape recorders. They create a layering of sound that echoes, each note or word appearing three times, not quite in unison, distorted and out of phase. There is an accumulation of sound and text throughout the evening, evoking the accumulation of water as it flows downstream. This is also reflected in the spaces as they get bigger, and in the movement: there is a movement vocabulary that accumulates and amplifies as we travelled downstream. In the last site I move with eyes open through this wide open space. I move with attention to the complex history and geography of the space we are in, the sound of traffic, the late summer eve, the coolness in the air, the buried river beneath us, and the setting of the sun.

In a recent article, Robert Wilson describes how he used space in *Einstein on the Beach*: “If I see you this close, it's a portrait. If I move back, you're a still life. If I go three blocks away, you are part of the landscape” (Als 82). He goes on to explain how different sections of his piece were created with this use of space in mind. I drew on this concept in *Field Guide*. The first space had the quality of a portrait, the second site a still life, and the last space a landscape (see Appendix C). We started in close

proximity and travelled to extreme expansiveness. I wanted to bring the intimacy of the first space with us as we travelled along, telescoping out, as the day, the summer, and the dance opened and expanded.

During my research in the summer of 2012, I had been looking at the work of Steve Paxton's *Goldberg Variations*. When he was in his 50s, Paxton created and danced a full evening improvised solo performance to Gould's recording of the *Goldberg Variations*. Paxton blurs the line between performer and choreographer. His work is often improvised, collaborative, and very linked to somatic practices – martial arts, aikido, and contact improvisation. This is also the lineage I am working in. The “Aria” is the first piece of J.S. Bach's *Goldberg Variations*, and Paxton, in his version of the *Goldberg*, doesn't dance to it. As the “Aria” plays, he stands onstage in the darkness (*Material for the Spine*). I was curious about this moment, about standing in the dark, listening. This is partly why I chose to collaborate with the audience on the text. I wanted to be unsure of what might happen, to be open to the unknown, in a certain sense in the dark. I wanted to make a proposal to the audience and see where we might travel together.

I wrote this short text as a note in the program, to be read after the performance was finished:

I created this solo over the summer. I wanted to go back to the very beginning. What happens before that? What happens while we are standing in the dark, or in a doorway, not sure what might happen next? The beginning – it's a delicate moment. This new solo is set to text generated in collaboration with the

audience and is completely improvised. There is a starting point. I'd like to start from where we are and see where we can go. Follow things downstream. This solo takes place in three sites along the route of the buried Garrison Creek. We sleep over it. I dream about it.

...No one would know except for ancient maps
That such a brook ran water. But I wonder
If from its being kept forever under,
The thoughts may not have risen that so keep
This new-built city from both work and sleep.
—Robert Frost, “A Brook in the City”



b-side

What is the autobiography of the body?

How might we dance our history, our past?

Is it possible to be in more than one place at the same time?

Is it possible to unfold into a future moment without our past?

b-side was an improvised solo working with words and questions that emerged through the process of working on *Field Guide*. I was given strict guidelines for this project: it was to be an “autobiographical solo” ten to fifteen minutes in length. I wanted to create a structure that asked the preceding questions explicitly (even verbally) and then try to answer them through movement onstage. These questions emerged through my continuing work with the text that I had created in collaboration with the audience in *Field Guide*. What interested me most about the idea of an autobiographical solo was looking at what lies underneath the surface, underneath the surface of the skin, underneath the narrative of our lives.

I had a plan to cycle or recycle some of the material from *Field Guide* into this new solo. I knew that I wanted to work with the text generated by the audience of *Field Guide* and also with the cards themselves as objects. The morning after *Field Guide* I was listening to CBC radio, and heard an old interview with Glenn Gould, along with his two recordings of the “Aria.” I knew that he had recorded the *Goldberg Variations* in 1955 and 1981, but up until that point I hadn’t paid that much attention

to the difference between the two versions. I had used his 1955 recording in *Field Guide*.

I searched online for other interviews with Gould, and found one where he discusses re-recording the *Goldberg Variations*. He recalls listening to the recording of his younger self playing the “Aria” in 1955, and claims that he recognized the “fingerprints but not the spirit of the person who is playing.” He also expresses his desire, as he grows older, “to play in a slower and more ruminative fashion”; in fact, his 1981 recording of the “Aria” is almost twice as long as the 1955 version. I identified with this desire: I was injured from the process of creating *Field Guide*, and also felt the need to slow down, to play slower, to dance in a different way. Gould goes on to say that the music which most interests him is “contrapuntal...an explosion of simultaneous ideas,” and that that type of music needs more time to unfold. It needs to be played in a way that honours its complexity – slowly, deliberately, and ruminatively (“Glenn Gould”).

After gathering this interview, the newer version of the “Aria,” and the index cards, I had a proposal for a scene that could begin the piece. A table would be placed downstage centre and lit with a spotlight. On the table would be a tape recorder, which I would use to record and play back text. When I described this scene to Gabe, he handed me a copy of Beckett’s play *Krapp’s Last Tape*. In the play an older Krapp rummages in the drawers of a table looking for a tape, hoping to replay a past moment of his life. Unlike Gould, Krapp seems desperate for the past, and has difficulty moving into the future. He appears before us: pathetic, drunk, dishevelled and

cantankerous. Gould and Beckett had given me two examples of how to replay past moments, how to listen to the past onstage and simultaneously exist in the present.

The piece began as a conversation with the audience. In the past, I had worked with blurring the boundary between the real space we are in and the imaginal space that we propose in the theatre. I wanted to welcome the audience into the space and make the piece accessible for them. I knew a very large part of our audience would be undergraduate students from The Dance Experience (a Fine Arts elective course for non-dance majors that introduces students to contemporary dance; they are required to see the MFA autobiographical solo show and write a review). I wanted to do something to put these students at ease, and also to meet them in this space in a very real way.

As I enter the performance space, the house lights are still up on the audience: I can see them, they can see me, and we can see that we see each other. I sit down at the table and start to speak into a microphone. Every night the text was improvised, but it ran something like this:

Hello! Hi! [the audience would often respond]

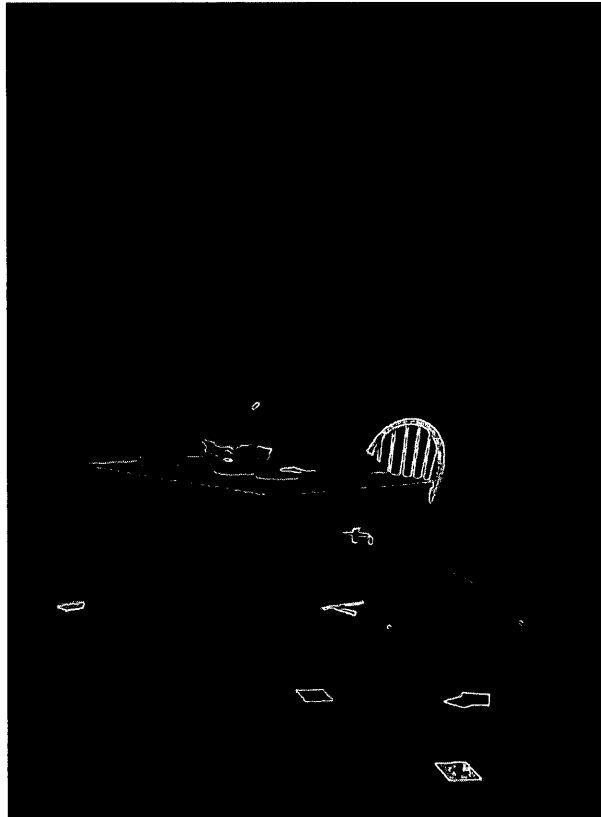
Welcome to our show and thanks so much for coming.

Preview, big night!

It is our first time with so many people, so we're all feeling a bit nervous. [a little laughter from the audience]

This is the last piece of the night, are you ready? [some nod and say "uh-huh"]

This piece has already begun...



I then press play on the tape recorder, which plays an excerpt of the interview with Glenn Gould. I lay all the cue cards from *Field Guide* on the table in two rows, and put on a red cloth blindfold. I start to move the cards around the table. First I gather them into a large pile. Then I separate three cards from the pile, sweeping the rest off the side of the desk. I then separate the outer two cards from the centre card, balance them on the edge of the desk and eventually let them fall. As the taped interview ends, I am left with a single card, determined through this chance operation. Audience members commented that the use of the blindfold and the cards made them think of a fortune-teller, who looks into the past and future with a kind of blindness to

the present. I am choosing a card in the same way that memory or dreams are chosen, blindly: it reveals itself, it chooses itself.

I take off the blindfold, flip the tape over, and begin a recording. I read the text on the cards out loud, starting with the card that is left on the table, and then moving to collect the cards on the floor. As I pick them up, I read fragments and elaborate on them, adding some text that I generated in response. All of this is being picked up by the tape recorder. Some of the text from this section of the piece is below, with audience/authors in brackets (see Appendix B).

I want to start from the now

and be all places at once (Danielle Baskerville)

I have been wondering if it possible to be in more than one place at the same time. Perhaps in a past and a present moment, or maybe in a real and an imaginal place.

and the sun is almost setting

and it is orange and red and I am thinking that this is the end of a day, which is burning itself out (Ellen Levine)

I have been thinking about days burning themselves out, the same way cells in the body burn themselves out, and if it is true what they say about the body and every 7 or 8 years we have an entirely new body, then what is the autobiography of the body? How might we dance our history, our past?

please close your eyes

look at the sun

then the sky (Alex Wolfson)

tracing past-ing unfold into a future moment (Ame Henderson)

*I have been wondering if it is possible to unfold into a future moment without
our past. Into a kind of forgetting.*

When I am finished recording, I rewind the tape to the beginning and play it back. I step away from the table, moving upstage and to my right. The tape has picked up all the sound in the room, including any noise created through movement, coughing, and rustling of paper. In this section we are listening collectively to a shared moment that has just passed, and I am moving to it. At the same time I am retreating in space away from the audience. I move in a more abstract way, somewhere between dancerly and pedestrian. This section serves as a bridge, connecting past and present, memory and forgetting, pedestrian and dancerly movement. I embody the architecture of the words as I move, and I place my body in the space just as the recording places a past moment into the present.



In the last section I move towards a kind of forgetting. As I step towards the back of the stage, Gould's later version of the "Aria" begins. It is slow and deliberate, but still virtuosic. Shimmering stars are projected on the black curtain at the back of the stage, suggesting the late fall evening outside. I have the memory of dancing to this music before, and it is also a new moment. There is this music and my body – that's all. The movement score is very physical: I am paying attention to the relationship between different body parts, the changing angles, distances and proximities that are in constant flux. I try to arrive at a moment of pure unfolding,

pure presence. I try to move towards a dance of forgetting. As dance artist Aimée

Dawn Robinson writes,

I feel relieved because my body *wants* to forget things. Perhaps, like other bodies, my body wants to forget pain, loss, hunger, labour, obligations, dreams and conversations. It wants to be free of the associations of history... Thus, a desire central to my dance practice is to develop a body that forgets. (38)

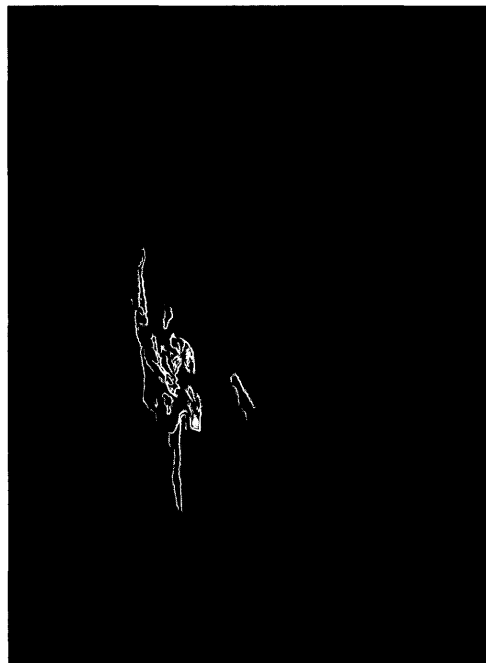
I might go further. I would like to develop a body that can move between:

memory and forgetting

past, present and future

real and imaginal

open to the ever-changing histories of our lives, and to the constant reconfiguration of our bodies.



the understory (part 3)

*Last night I dreamt you were a sequoia, rallied by the swailing – the controlled burn
raged and you were on fire. Crackling from the inside out. All your skin is destroyed.
Not a hint of a container. You are porous ash upon the windy ground.⁴*

My final thesis project was the creation and performance of *the understory*, in collaboration with Saskatchewan-based dance artist Johanna Bundon. There were several things that inspired the creation of the understory: the prairie and forest understory landscapes, personal and family history in Regina, and Johanna's writing and thoughts about the transformational power of fire. Johanna and I have been collaborating since 2007. We began by considering this piece as a continuation of the work we have been making together over the last five years, and in particular an evening-length piece we had made two years ago. Johanna writes:

Bee said something to me about starting this process from where we left off, which is to say, as a continuation of our work together in the spring of 2011. That work had led us into some explorations that I still felt really curious about.

One of these scenes involved reading/reciting Robert Frost's poem "Birches" while wearing a blindfold. I was drawn to this scene for a few reasons.

There are these elm trees in Regina, wrapped with bands to ward off Dutch elm beetles. Bee and I used to walk past them in Regina on our way to

⁴ I include an excerpt from *it takes faith to be an arsonist* by my collaborator Johanna Bundon, which was used in the performance of *the understory (part 3)*.

the theatre. If you squint, the trees look like blindfolded women. This image of a blindfolded woman felt important to me; I imagined it as a gesture of faith.

I am drawn to the image of trees. And I know that it is a recurring image in Bee's work. I think we are both somewhat of forests.

I had the sensation while reading "Birches" that I was trying to will myself into a tree. I've been curious about this image of woman as tree before, the way it appears in Greek myth and folklore. So it felt worth pursuing.

These reasons pointed to some thematic intersection between faith / blindness / trees. And for whatever reason, I had done some writing about this triad before in a piece called *it takes faith to be an arsonist*. This writing drew a relationship between arsonists, lighting tapers, and controlled forest burns as transformational acts involving fire. (Bundon)

This piece of writing, *it takes faith to be an arsonist*, proved to be instrumental in the creation of *the understory*. We used excerpts of the text in performance to provide context, contrast and depth. Ideas about the transformational power of fire also inspired our work.

We began an email exchange in the fall of 2012. Johanna sent me the arsonist text, and I sent her a list of objects I thought we could work with: thick wool blankets, a microphone, an old pair of shoes, a tire, a sapling, a winter coat, and a blindfold. Many we had worked with before. I was thinking about the space that we would be performing in, the Sandra Faire and Ivan Fecan Theatre (FFT) at York University, and its huge stage. It reminded me of the vastness of the prairies. I felt that these objects would provide us with a more specific sense of place, and that they might make us

feel more at home in this theatre. This sense of home is very important to us: it conveys an intimacy that can be difficult to achieve in a large proscenium theatre like the FFT. In the past we have performed mainly in older, smaller theatres with a more pronounced sense of history and intimacy. So we gathered the arsonist text and these objects as our main sources of inspiration, hoping to establish this sense of home.

We also each brought a recording to be used as a sound score for the piece. I brought with me *Parhelia* by the American composer Keith Kenniff, who writes post-classical piano music under the name Goldmund. *Parhelia* is a solo piano piece that contains a great deal of space and silence; one can hear the musician listening closely and considering each note he plays. This halting, listening quality also gives a sense of fragility, and of getting lost. In fact it is quite easy to get lost in this piece, as it contains a fair bit of repetition. Johanna offered a recording of a crackling fire that she had found. She describes the meaning of this sound:

The idea of using the sound of fire was peripherally connected to the *arsonist* text, and also supported the implied warmth of the blankets. The fire sound also offered a contrast to the bleak winter snowscape, which we were imaginatively and realistically working in. (Bundon)

Rehearsal

I arrived in Regina in the middle of a cold snap: daytime highs were close to minus-20 Celsius. I slept fully clothed with several blankets on, and wore at least three layers of clothes in the day. We worked in New Dance Horizons (NDH), a

studio that lies on the outskirts of town in an old church building with not much insulation against the cold. When the door to the building opened, cold air would sweep into the studio. Sometimes we walked to the studio. It was a treacherous walk, icy and blustery, but not without beauty. It was often sunny, with a blanket of snow everywhere, a big sky and blinding white light. On especially cold days we drove over icy roads and packed snow. We tried to stay warm in the studio. We rolled up in our blankets and danced in our coats. We talked about the transformative power of fire and heat. We looked outside and saw the quiet fallow expanse of the prairie landscape.

I have worked in Regina several times before, but never in the winter. I love working there, and coming from the big city I especially appreciate the space and the quiet. I also feel strangely at home in Regina. My grandmother was from Regina: she is buried in its cemetery, and my grandfather's name is on the cenotaph (he was lost at sea in WWII). The winter landscape and a melancholy sense of home, a strange mix of solitude and belonging, definitely influenced the piece. Johanna writes:

The conditions of a place cannot help but inform the content of the work. In some ways, the most overt condition of creating work in Saskatchewan is solitude.

Solitude is a reality of the prairies. It is present in the aesthetics of the place. Imagine, long reaching fields with no one in sight; or a sole figure walking on the rolling hills of the south. It is also a reality when working in a small dance community such as that in Regina.

This solitude, which can feel like isolation, is rendered even more

prominent once winter washes over the scene. The cold, even in the urban centres, is a reality that naturally draws people into their homes and away from social spaces.

This landscape does offer a unique and private atmosphere for creation. The action of coming together, for work, or company, or warmth, is a deliberate action in the wintertime. (Bundon)

We started with the most basic agreement: we would create the piece as two solos and a duet. We brought together our objects, text and music into the studio, and began working with the blankets as a potential solo for Johanna. The blankets, which we found backstage at NDH, were moving blankets (the kind used to wrap furniture for storage or transport); they had a thickness and a stiffness that invited shaping and sculpting. Johanna had the idea of building something with the blankets, a kind of fort or shelter, but to build that shape first with the body. So we started with Johanna blindfolded, folding and unfolding her body, and eventually shifting to the folding and unfolding of the blanket. Through experimentation, we found a folding ritual: separated in space, we each fold three corners of a blanket into the centre and lift the last corner into the air, forming the shape of a triangle or sail. As the sail rises, we layer over this image the following text from *it takes faith to be an arsonist*:

The action of striking the match requires considerably less skill than the action of walking away from an already lit flame. The conditions for fire are scientific. The conditions of fire are calculated. However the conditions of sustenance are unknown. The wind, the rain, the wick, the clumsy bodies moving about the room.

We continued our exploration with the blankets, and found that the sail could transform into an egg shape, as Johanna drew all four corners together and enclosed herself in the blanket. There she found a brief stillness, and then a gentle rocking from side to side. As Johanna emerged from the egg shape, the edges of the discarded blanket defined the edges of a flame or fire. So the next step seemed to be clear: she put on a pair of red shoes and a red jacket, and danced using the crumpled edge of the blanket as her score. Here we decided to add the following text (written by Johanna and spoken by myself) to support this fire dance.

There are a hundred reasons a fire will go out. A hundred more why it will not start. The wood too wet, the kindling too fine, the fire-worshipper impatient and simply unable to light the dampened match. To light a fire requires a certain amount of faith. Of course the conditions need to be just so; the wood bone dry, the wind dead calm, the fire sunk into the shelter of a pit. But even with all of these conditions well-aligned, a fire can go out.

The process of making this section of the piece took a few days to complete. We worked on a small part each day, adding and layering as we went along. We then moved on to work on the next solo. We continued to work with the blankets, but we felt that we had, at least momentarily, exhausted their potential, and so we began working with the tire.

In the fall I had watched *Pour la suite du monde*, the 1963 Québécois documentary by Pierre Perrault. The film traces the story of what happened when old-timers from Île-aux-Coudres, a small island in the St. Lawrence River, were persuaded to revive a local whale-catching practice. In the film, there is a scene where

local children are playing inside a barn with tractor tires. I was charmed by their mischievousness and their great sense of play. The tires had so much movement potential, supporting and guiding the children as they moved through the space, offering acceleration and changes in orientation. I wanted to work with the tire in this solo, drawing on their sense of play. We developed a squeaky entrance, in which I rolled in while lying inside the tire. What followed was a very simple sequence of standing, sitting, and experimenting with the tire at different angles and orientations. The solo was both cheeky and absurd. Johanna remembered some text about “tire kickers” that she had heard before in a comedy show; we found this text in the online Urban Dictionary, and layered it on top of this solo:

Tire Kicker: someone who is indecisive about purchasing a product or service, and never feels satisfied with what they are offered. In the end a tire kicker may or may not buy. The term comes from sales people at car dealerships. Tire kickers would come around frequently, kick the tires a few times on the cars that they liked, but never make a solid purchasing decision on any particular car. (“tire kicker”)

Just preceding the scene with the tires in *Pour la suite du monde* is a scene in which a group of men are out in the St. Lawrence River, constructing the weir that will be used to trap the whales. They cut the bottoms of small trees into stakes, load them up in small boats, then press them into the riverbed every metre or so, creating a long, curved enclosure. I had an idea to assemble a similar kind of construction on stage. With the tire and the blankets, we tried to create a small forest with doweling, using some small branches we had with us in the studio. Instead of a weir, we tried to construct the understory of a forest (the lower layer of the forest that grows beneath

the canopy of taller trees). And as we did this, we tried playing some recorded text written by Johanna, as if the understory was speaking to us:

Last night I dreamt you were a sequoia, rallied by the swailing – the controlled burn raged and you were on fire. Crackling from the inside out. All your skin is destroyed. Not a hint of container. You are porous ash upon the windy ground.

We then began a duet centered on becoming the understory, moving not as ourselves but as a landscape. In a way it was also a dance of forgetting, in which we moved beyond our pasts, our selves, even our species. Certainly when I dance it I understand what Eiko and Koma mean when they say, “it is a relief for us not to be confined by humanity” (51). Everything had led us to that moment: where all of the objects in the space came together to create a part of the understory, and we move also as part of that understory. We tried to decentralize our importance in this work, letting ourselves connect with and become part of the environment that surrounds us. Our score for the movement in this section included the following:

attention to:

the canopy/height of the theatre

the relation/triangulation to each other, to the tree, to the audience

finding unison – flickering in and out

change of level – contrast

delicate feeling of the understory

the life of the understory

information from the constructed understory onstage – shape, form and fragility

(see Appendix C)

There is a lot to pay attention to and a lot to forget. To complete our process in Regina, we had a small showing: a run of our piece for an audience of close friends and NDH staff, with a short session of feedback afterwards. Several audience members commented on the intimacy of the work and its multilayered nature. Many viewers were involved in theatre, film and visual arts, and they linked their own practices, perspectives and interests to our work, in a lively and productive chat.

Bringing the piece back to Toronto had its challenges. Johanna would arrive just a week before the opening. For our first work-in-progress showing, I played a video of our work in Regina. For the second showing, I performed the work as a solo, revisiting the material we had created in Regina. And for the last showing, a dancer named Kate Nankervis filled in for Johanna, helping us to establish the work as a duet in the space.

The feedback I received during these showings was mainly about how to make this intimate work readable in the larger proscenium space of the FFT. These challenges were bridged with the help of Parker Nowlan, our lighting designer. His design focused tightly on the action for the beginning of the piece, and then expanded to emphasize the largeness of the space and our smallness in relation to it. This created a connection first to us as individuals, and then to the wider environment. It established a sense of intimacy, while still acknowledging the space around us.

Johanna arrived in Toronto just days before a huge snowstorm. The storm confined us to working at home, in the same small room where *Field Guide* began. Although we were originally thrown off by the inability to work in a larger space, we found that this gave us the opportunity to revisit the intimate nature of this work

together before bringing it to the FFT.

I recently watched a video of our technical rehearsal at York. In this vast white space, we appear thin and delicate. Fragile. All around us is the blank wide spaciousness of the prairie of the theatre, and we've filled it with the objects that are essential to our survival. Blankets, wood for fire, a warm winter coat, a microphone to amplify our voices, a tire to help us get around. Personal and family memories resurface as I watch us dancing. We appear so alone in this space. And somehow I am brought back to the understory, to this poem that Johanna recited in our earlier work:

So was I once myself a swinger of birches.
And so I dream of going back to be.
It's when I'm weary of considerations,
And life is too much like a pathless wood
Where your face burns and tickles with the cobwebs
Broken across it, and one eye is weeping
From a twig's having lashed across it open.
I'd like to get away from earth awhile
And then come back to it and begin over.
May no fate willfully misunderstand me
And half grant what I wish and snatch me away
Not to return. Earth's the right place for love:
I don't know where it's likely to go better.
I'd like to go by climbing a birch tree,
And climb black branches up a snow-white trunk
Toward heaven, till the tree could bear no more,
But dipped its top and set me down again.
That would be good both going and coming back.
One could do worse than be a swinger of birches.

—from “Birches,” by Robert Frost

Outcomes

The process of making *Other choreographies* made my own artistic process more transparent to me. It seems clear to me now that I first gather materials, and with them I create a frame or structure and let things unfold from there. I work from inside the frame as a performer: somatically, improvisationally, and collaboratively. These methodologies are quite interwoven, but I will address them here in sequence.

All of the processes – *field guide*, *b-side* and *the understory (part 3)* – began with a period of gathering: information, ideas, questions, objects, etc. I collect a lot of things, and sometimes it seems hard to imagine how they might fit together. For example: in *the understory*, the tire, the fire text, the blankets; or in *Field Guide*, Lispector, Perec, the Garrison Creek. I gather them and let them sit together, and then I see how they might take shape. An interview with architect Maya Lin helped explain this part of my own process to me. Lin writes:

I try to think of an artwork as an idea without a shape. And if you think about what that means, it means: try to hold back formulating a physical idea of what something looks like. Try to articulate what the needs are, what your desires are, what your goals are. And then, I might study something for three months, six months, eight months. And then I put it all away. Later on, sometimes I wake up, I just make a model, or a shape occurs when I go to the site for the first or second time... I call it 'laying an egg' because unlike someone who has an idea and then works it and works it and polishes it, once I get this idea, it's quick, and it's pretty pure. (Krasner)

Like Maya Lin, I gather and study and then see what structure presents itself. I am not wilful in my creation. I really follow what is already there; through a process of bricolage, I assemble what I find. In that way I am in collaboration with the materials I am working with. We create a structure together.

My process has been deeply informed by the practice of somatics, in which I have become increasingly involved over the last decade. In particular I have been studying Open Source Forms (a system of dance training derived from Skinner Releasing Technique, based on the explorations of Joan Skinner). Open Source Forms works mainly with images, improvisation and deep states. Through a practice of awareness and letting go, it aims to free the potential that may be hidden underneath the surface tension of the body. In Open Source Forms, I have found that the most transformative element is the simple practice of awareness. In the gathering phase of my creative process, I work on developing awareness, listening to the ideas and concepts that surround a project and to the actual space that the project exists in. I start a bit in the dark and slowly begin to open my eyes to find what is there. As Rebecca Solnit writes, “Leave the door open for the unknown, the door into the dark. That’s where the most important things come” (4). Somatics affects movement as well as process. Training in deep body listening creates the foundation for a movement vocabulary that is grounded, specific, and deeply connected to the ideas and material of the piece.

My process also integrates improvisation on multiple levels. Flexibility and responsiveness come in handy at every moment in the process, making it possible to make use of the best of what presents itself. Being open to working with what is right

in front of me meant working with the Garrison Creek in *Field Guide*, devising a solo for the Dance Experience students with *b-side*, and working with moving blankets in *the understory*. This openness and responsiveness to proximate materials and environments led me to unexpected discoveries and the building of very specific frames. Once the dramaturgical frame is established, improvisation provides the opportunity for responsiveness within that frame. When this responsiveness is grounded in somatic practice and body awareness, it can lead to detailed and nuanced performance work. Watching a performer respond in real-time, I see something that is at once specific and open. I am excited by this process of unfolding onstage. In the words of Vera Mantero:

There are a lot of things I allow myself to do in improvisation which I would not do in my choreographic work, like... dancing. At crucial moments dancing has been made possible for me by improvising. It is the only way to keep dance in a state that I can accept it. When I fix movement, it feels much poorer, stale. Improvisation has an energy coming from the “here and now” which makes the dance keep a vibration, a movement inside, that I can agree with and so I can allow it to exist and be there. (in Peeters, ed., 106)

Collaboration with others is key in all this work. I try to collaborate with everything: objects, sound, text, performance space, and people. I try to find a way to work together, so that our work might be strengthened by each other. I collaborate with objects and ideas to create a dramaturgical frame for my work. In *Field Guide*, I collaborated with the audience in the sound-score of the work; in *the understory*, I

collaborated with Johanna to create the piece. I believe the work is made richer by these collaborations. Benoît Lachambre said in a recent interview about his newest solo “snakeskins,”

There’s also an under-title, a surtitle – *a fake solo*...and that’s because.... it can’t be a solo, it’s nearly impossible to do a solo, unless you do everything yourself, and you’re the only person managing the representation *and* you’re the only spectator. Then it’s a solo. (“Interview with Benoît Lachambre”)

We truly do nothing alone. *Other choreographies* makes clear the importance and strength of working together and creating collaboratively.

In this paper, I have outlined a way of creating from the performer’s perspective; this is only my way, and surely there are many more. In my own process these things seem most important:

- making or acknowledging environment
- establishing a sense of place
- collecting and assembling objects, ideas, inspiration
- making of a score or frame
- deep body listening and awareness (somatic practice)
- responsiveness and flexibility (improvisation)
- working with what/who is there (collaboration)

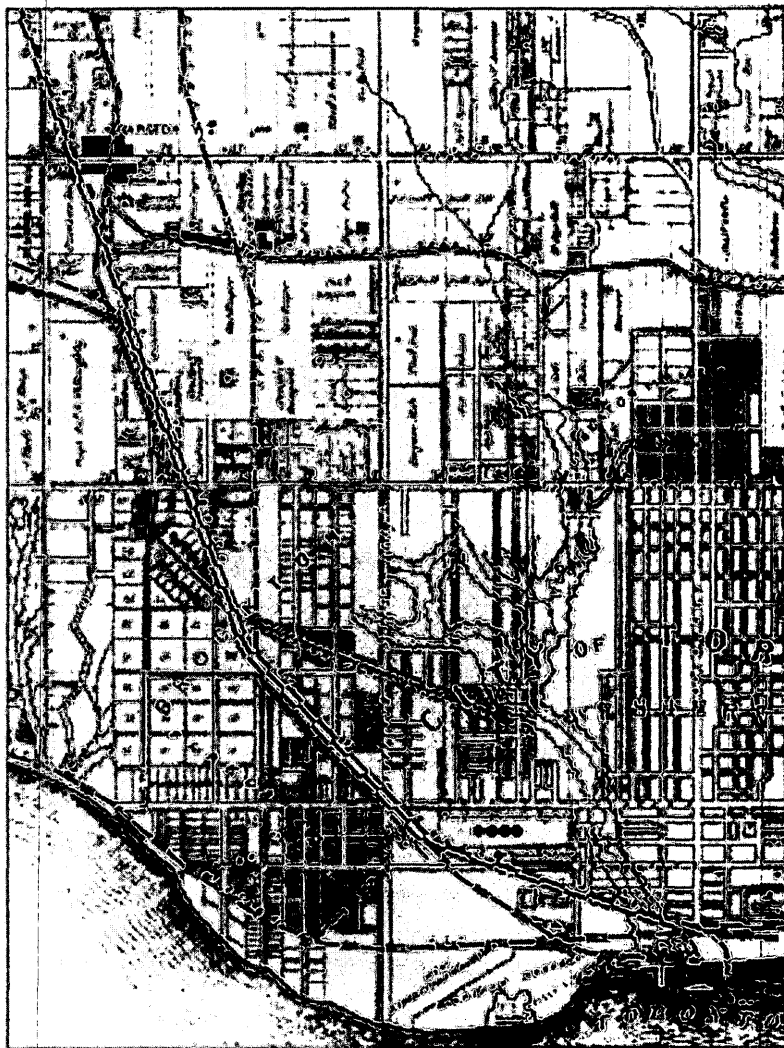
It is my hope that by creatively assembling objects, sounds, ideas and movement with awareness, listening, responsiveness and interconnectivity, *Other choreographies* can offer an alternative way to make dance work, as well as an open and receptive way of being in the world.

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Appendix A: Programs



Program front *Field Guide*

Field Guide is a means of naming things, of establishing an identity through one's surroundings, of translating the natural world into one's private history.

-Michael Water (on Robert Haas)

Creation and Performance: Bee Pallomina

Text: Bee Pallomina with Carol Anderson, Danielle Baskerville, Darcey Callison, Mairéad Filgate, Ame Henderson, Steve Levine, Ellen Levine, Kelly Magill, Holly Small and Meredith Thompson

Music: The "Aria" from *Bach's Goldberg Variation* played by Glenn Gould.

Sound Design: Gabriel Levine

Front of House: Danielle Baskerville

Documentation: Lee Henderson

I created this solo over the summer. I wanted to go back to the very beginning. What happens before that? What happens while we are standing in the dark, or in a doorway, not sure what might happen next. The beginning- it's a delicate moment. This new solo is set to text generated in collaboration with the audience and is completely improvised. There is a starting point. I'd like to start from where we are and see where we can go. Follow things downstream. This solo takes place in three sites along the route of the buried Garrison Creek. We sleep over it. I dream about it.

Field Guide is part of my thesis work towards an MFA in choreography at York University.

Lots of people helped make this happen. Thank you for inspiration, ideas, objects and support! Danielle Baskerville, Lee Henderson, Ame Henderson, Yvonne Ng, Holly Small, Darcey Callison, Catherine Murray, Robert Haas, Aimée Dawn Robinson, Clarice Lispector, Glenn Gould, J.S. Bach, Steve Paxton and most of all Gabe Levine.

Program back *Field Guide*

b side

Choreographer / Interpreter: Bee Margot Pallomina

Music Title: Aria from Goldberg Variations

Composer: J.S. Bach

Music Performed by: Glenn Gould

Text: Glenn Gould and Bee Pallomina

Lighting Designer: William Mackwood

MFA Supervisors: Holly Small and Carol Anderson

**memory/ bridging / real, imaginal
past, present / underneath / revealing conversation
/ inhabiting**

Program notes for *b-side*

the understory (part 3)

Score and Performance: Bee Pallomina and Johanna Bundon

Music: "Parhelia" by Goldmund

Text: Johanna Bundon, Wikipedia and Urban Dictionary

Lighting Design: Parker Nowlan

Costumes designed by: Bee Pallomina and Johanna Bundon

Set and Props by: Lange Moving Supplies, Michelin and Mother Nature

MFA Supervisors: Holly Small and Carol Anderson

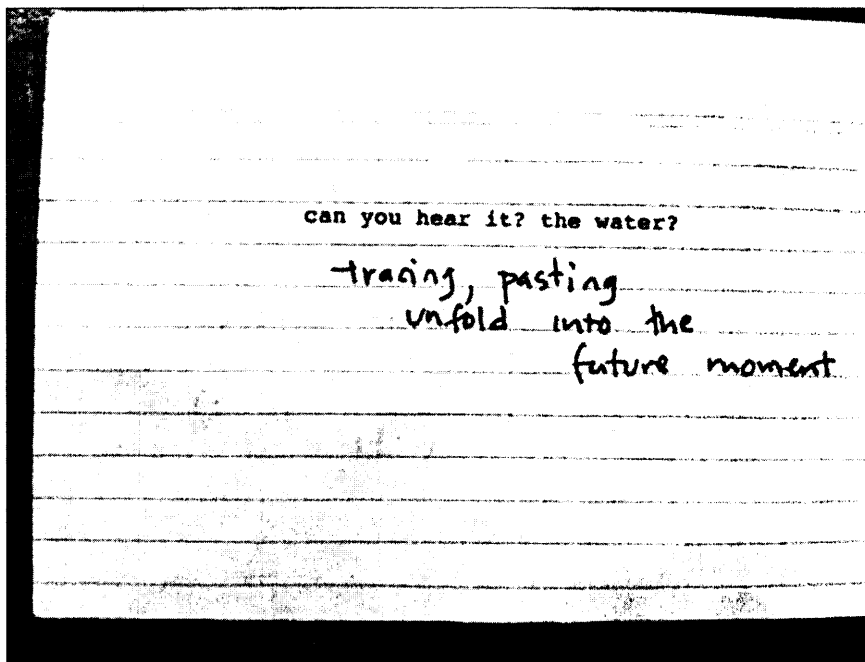
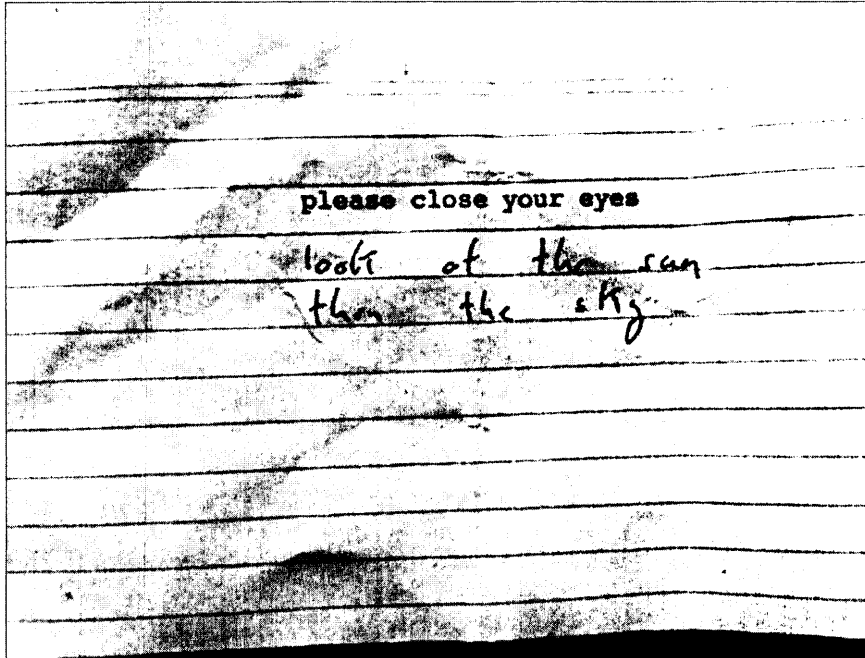
Johanna and I met up in Saskatchewan last December, during a cold snap. We tried to stay warm in the studio. We found blankets to roll up in and danced in our coats. We talked about the transformative power of fire and heat. We looked outside and saw the quiet expanse of the prairie landscape.

Thank you: Steve and Ellen Levine, Jayden Pfeifer, New Dance Horizons, York University, Holly Small, Kate Nankervis, Lee Henderson, Parker Nowlan, Slade Lander, Gerda Wekerle and especially Gabe Levine.



Program notes *the understory (part 3)*

Appendix B: Cards from *Field Guide*



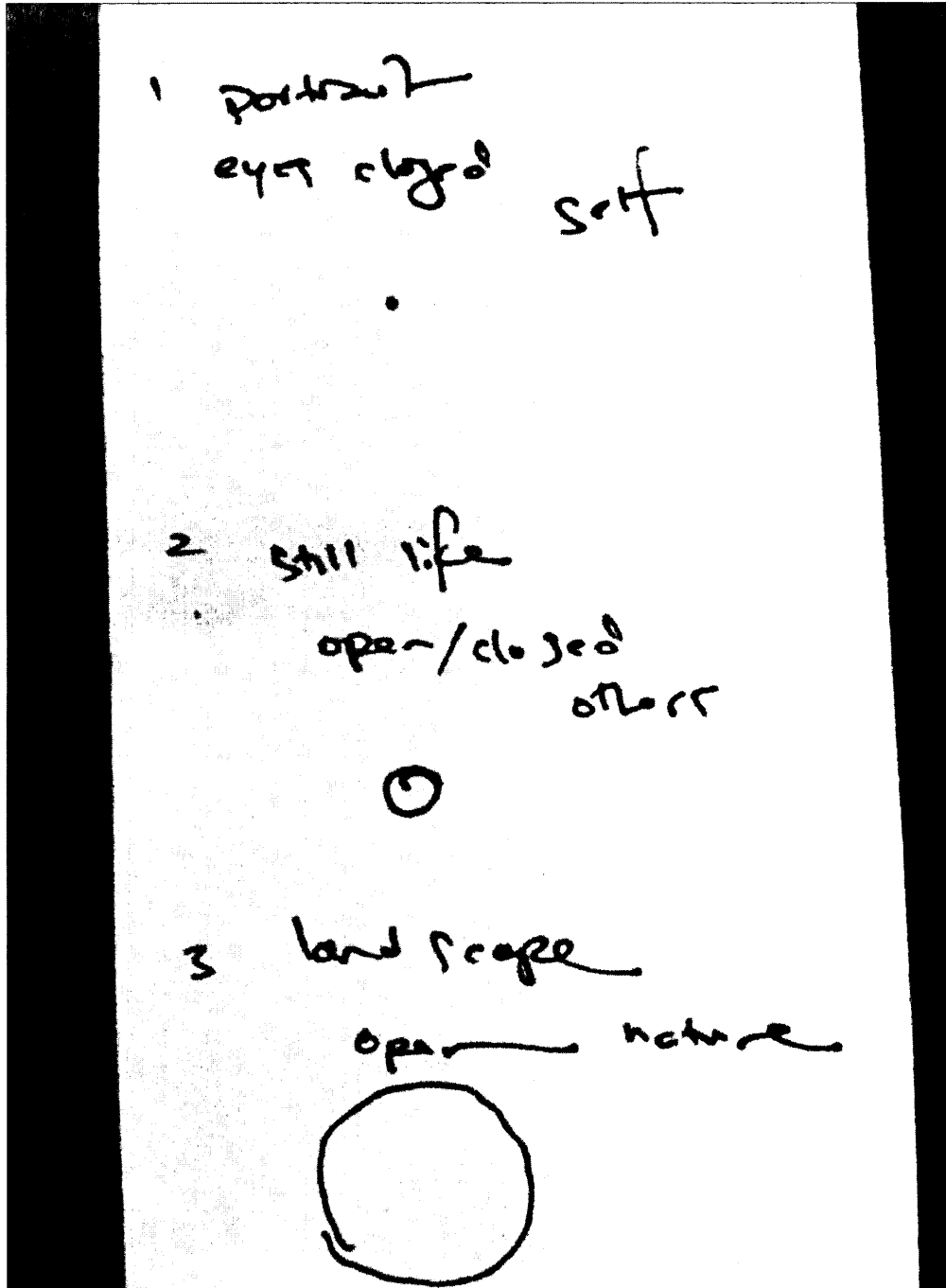
Cards for *Field Guide* and *b-side* (Alex Wolfson and Ame Henderson)

I want to start from the now
and be all places at once
take a breath.

and the sun is almost setting
and it is orange and
red and I'm thinking
that this is the end
of a day which is
burning itself out.

Cards for *Field Guide* and *b-side* (Danielle Baskerville and Ellen Levine)

Appendix C: Scores



Score for the use of space in *Field Guide* (inspired by Robert Wilson)

Scorer.

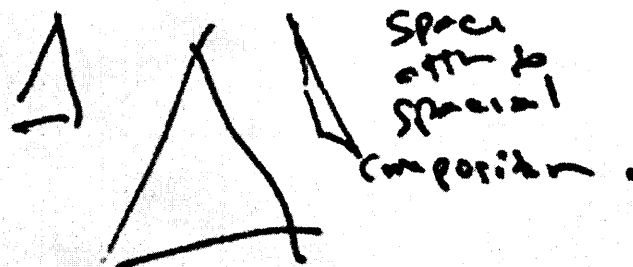
1. fun to P
2. architecture of words
3. dancy to sound/music
4. looking for openings
+ forgetting
5. stay with things longer
than you want.
6. be mindful of the
space you are
in
7. listen. The layers of
the space
8. Curiosity of child.

dancing the space
dancing the time.

Score for movement in *Field Guide*

the understory
 + the canopy / the height of
 the tree

triangle her job + tree
 what is the relation



unisono → flicking it out.
 change of level → contrast.
 slight delicate feel of the
 understory.
 the tactile feel of the life
 of the understory.

Score for first and last section of *the understory* (part 3)